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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TAIPEI 000864

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [CH](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: NSC CHAIRMAN SU CHI: PRESIDENT MA YING-JEOU'S TOP  
CROSS-STRAIT AND FOREIGN POLICY ADVISOR

REF: A. 07 TAIPEI 2607

[1](#)B. 05 TAIPEI 3284

Classified By: AIT Director Stephen M. Young,  
Reasons: 1.4 (b/d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: NSC Secretary-General Su Chi is a longtime friend and advisor to President Ma Ying-jeou, having served most recently as a speechwriter and deputy campaign manager for Ma. NSC colleagues predict Su's NSC will play an advisory role, and will not oversee or manage cross-strait, foreign, or defense policy. A former chairman of the Mainland Affairs Council (1999-2000), Su is well-known for having coined the term "1992 Consensus" when the DPP came into power in 2000 in an effort to facilitate cross-strait dialogue. At times controversial, Su Chi as a legislator led politically motivated efforts by the KMT to block missile defense upgrades for several years, and he also made unsubstantiated claims that President Chen Shui-bian had ordered the development of nuclear weapons. Despite extensive experience in government, Su seems at heart more an academic than an official. He is one of the KMT's top experts on foreign policy, including the U.S., and on cross-strait relations. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) President Ma Ying-jeou's appointment of Su Chi to head the National Security Council came as no surprise since Su has long been Ma's chief advisor on foreign policy and cross-strait issues. Su has regularly accompanied Ma on his international trips, written key policy papers, and served as deputy manager for Ma's presidential campaign. Su Chi also serves as one of Ma's principal intermediaries with AIT, and he often accompanies Ma in meetings with Americans. Prior to his new assignment, Su was a KMT at-large legislator from 2004-2008, playing a leading role in the Legislative Yuan's (LY) Defense Committee. Previously, Su Chi was Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) Chairman from 1999-2000.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Prior to becoming well acquainted with Su Chi, Ma Ying-jeou had already developed a friendship with Su's younger brother Su Yeong-chin while in high school in Taipei. The two went on to study law together at National Taiwan University and Su Yeong-chin, now chairman of the National Communications Commission (NCC), has been a close advisor to Ma on constitutional issues. Su Chi, who studied international relations, developed a rapport with Ma when both, while studying in the U.S., became involved in the 1970's Diaoyutai student movement (disputing Japan's claim to

the Diaoyutai or Senkaku Islands). Ma and Su Chi were also members of the "Anti-Communist Patriotic Alliance," a student group opposed to the mainland communist government, whose ranks included individuals from high-ranking KMT families. Once these students returned to Taiwan, a number became the core of the KMT's next generation of leaders and officials.

#### NSC As Thinktank, Not Policymaker

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14. (C) NSC Deputy-Secretary General Kao Chang told AIT recently that the NSC under Su Chi will function strictly as an advisory council on cross-Strait, foreign, and defense policy, and will not serve as a policy coordination office. Kao stressed that he and fellow NSC Deputy Secretary-General Ho Sze-yin and NSC Counselor Chen De-sheng are all academics with little or no policy-making experience. The NSC will research pressing and long-term policy questions and provide President Ma with recommendations, said Kao, and will not oversee or coordinate policy decisions and their implementation by the Foreign or Defense ministries or the Mainland Affairs Council. Other NSC leaders, including Ho Sze-yin and Senior Advisor Mignonne Chan, however, have told AIT that the NSC will seek to coordinate among Taiwan government agencies, but more on the order of mediating differences than orchestrating policy.

#### Optimistic About Cross-Strait, U.S.-Taiwan Relations

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15. (C) Prior to the presidential election, Su Chi told acting

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EAP/TC Desk Director Doug Spelman in December 2007 that the KMT experience with China during the late-80's to early-90's suggested that Beijing would be more tolerant of U.S.-Taiwan arms sales with a KMT administration in place (ref a). During that period, Su explained, Taiwan purchased some 150 F-16's and several Knox-class frigates from the U.S., as well as Mirage fighters and Lafayette frigates from France. It was during this period, he pointed out, that Taiwan and PRC counterparts held 16 public and 27 secret rounds of talks, culminating in what is now known as the "1992 consensus."

16. (C) During the same period, Taiwan also managed to enhance its participation in international organizations and to increase the number of its diplomatic allies, Su told Spelman. According to Su, Beijing was willing to tolerate Taiwan's efforts to enlarge its diplomatic and international circles and to improve its defensive capability so long as Taipei and Beijing were talking to each other, and Taiwan did not push for independence. China is much stronger and more confident today than it was 15 years ago, Su acknowledged, though it is preoccupied with its own problems of internal unrest resulting from growing economic disparities. The PRC leadership, thus, would welcome a chance to put aside the "Taiwan problem" for the time being, Su argued. For its part, a KMT government would drop the push for independence, and seek a "modus vivendi" with China. In exchange for taking independence off the table, Su argued, a KMT government could demand, and China would be willing to allow increased international space for Taiwan.

#### Sometimes Controversial

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17. (C) Su has been controversial on occasion. A book published in 2005 asserted that Su Chi coined the term "92 consensus" in April 2000, just after DPP President Chen Shui-bian's victory, in an effort to break the impasse over one China and give the two sides "room for detente." In February 2006, Su Chi acknowledged that this information was accurate. In explaining why he had invented the term "92 consensus," Su said he wanted to repackage the negotiating position of "one China, separate interpretations" that Taiwan adopted in 1992 in a way that would facilitate dialogue

between the two sides, which the PRC had suspended after President Lee Teng-hui announced his "two-state theory" in 1999. Although the DPP subsequently rejected the "92 consensus," the new KMT government and the PRC both now accept the "92 consensus" as a basis for the resumption of cross-Straits dialogue beginning June 11.

18. (C) Su Chi also devised the KMT canard that the failure of President Chen's "missile defense referendum" in 2004 constituted a legal obstacle to the purchase of Patriot-2 missile upgrades and new Patriot-3 batteries until the three-year "ban" expired in March 2007 (ref b). The KMT used Su's argument to justify withholding KMT legislative caucus support for new missile systems and upgrades until December 2007, raising concerns at the time about the KMT's commitment to strengthening Taiwan's defenses. Subsequently, Su and the KMT have taken a more positive attitude toward defense modernization.

19. (C) In October 2007, Su made the quite startling claim in the LY that President Chen Shui-bian had secretly ordered the Chungshan Institute of Science and Technology to develop nuclear weapons. Su further claimed that Chen was developing nuclear weapons and offensive missiles to stir up tensions with China and with the U.S. for political purposes, including blackmailing the U.S. into granting him political asylum. Su asserted his information came (indirectly) from a high-ranking DPP legislator. Su's unsubstantiated and implausible claims raised some questions at the time about his credibility.

#### Personal Information

10. (SBU) Su Chi is married to former Chinese Television System (CTS) news anchor Grace Yueh-ching Chen. Although,

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Chen has herself harbored political ambitions in the past, she has so far stayed out of the fray due to a series of life circumstances including the birth of her two children and the illness of her husband. At 42 years old, Su Chi was diagnosed with liver cancer. Following a successful operation to remove an eight-centimeter tumor, Su relied on his wife to help him through his convalescence. Chen has recently written a best-selling book on healthy living based on her experience.

11. (SBU) Su reports he has adopted a more health conscious lifestyle since his operation, giving up alcohol and smoking while getting sufficient rest and going for regular physical checkups. He also says his new lease on life has instilled in him a new outlook that focuses less on acquiring recognition and more on acting according to his conscience, regardless of how others may react. Su has repeatedly stated in interviews that he will exit the political stage if his cancer relapses.

12. (C) In mid-2007, Su informed AIT that he would not seek re-election to the Legislative Yuan, and would instead focus his energies on Ma Ying-jeou's presidential campaign. Su confided that he did not enjoy the rough-and-tumble politics of the LY. If Ma did not win the presidency, Su, a former professor, said he would gladly return to academia.

#### Appendix: Curriculum Vitae

13. (U) Present Position: Secretary General, National Security Council, May 2008-present.

14. (U) Previous Positions: KMT at-large legislator, 2004-2008; Concurrent Professor, Mainland Research Institute, Tamkang University, 2000-2008; Convener, National Security Division, KMT National Policy Foundation, Taipei, May 2000-2004; Council Member, National Unification Council,

Presidential Office, March 1999-2000; Chairman, Mainland Affairs Council, Executive Yuan (EY), January 1999-2000; Research Fellow, National Unification Council, Presidential Office, 1997-1999; Deputy Secretary General, Presidential Office, 1997-1999; Minister without Portfolio, May-October 1997; Director-General, Government Information Office, 1996-1997; Vice Chairman, Mainland Affairs Council, EY, 1993-1996; Member, Research, Development and Evaluation Commission, EY, 1993-1994; Deputy Director, Mainland Operation Department, KMT Central Committee, 1992-1993; Deputy Director, Institute of International Relations (IIR), National Chengchi University (NCCU), 1990-1993; Secretary General, Taiwan Chinese Political Science Association, 1991; Associate Professor (1984-1989) & Professor (1990-1993), NCCU; Associate Research Fellow, IIR, NCCU, 1984-1989.

¶15. (U) Political Affiliation: Member, KMT Central Advisory Committee, 1997-present.

¶16. (U) Education: Ph.D., Political Science, Columbia University, 1984; M.A., Political Science, Columbia University, 1980; M.A., International relations, Johns Hopkins University, 1975; B.A., Diplomacy, National Chengchi University, 1971.

¶17. (U) DPOB: October 1, 1949, Taichung, Taiwan. Family: married to Grace Yueh-ching Chen; one daughter (14) and one son (11), both living in Taiwan. Language Proficiencies: English, highly proficient (S-4).  
YOUNG